

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

VSB OPCO, LLC,

Plaintiff,

v.

SNACK INNOVATIONS, INC. and ALLEN BENZAKEN,

Defendants.

Case No.: 1:23-cv-03662-NRB

STIPULATED PROTECTIVE ORDER

STIPULATED PROTECTIVE ORDER

1. **PURPOSES AND LIMITATIONS**

Disclosure and discovery activity in this action are likely to involve production of confidential, proprietary, or private information for which special protection from public disclosure and from use for any purpose other than prosecuting this litigation may be warranted. Accordingly, the parties hereby stipulate to and petition the court to enter the following Stipulated Protective Order. The parties acknowledge that this Order does not confer blanket protections on all disclosures or responses to discovery and that the protection it affords from public disclosure and use extends only to the limited information or items that are entitled to confidential treatment under the applicable legal principles.

The parties acknowledge that there is an action pending in the United States District Court for the Central District of California, titled *VSB OPCO, LLC v. Snack Innovations*, Case No. 2:23-cv-07166-SVW-PVC. This Stipulated Protective Order is designed to provide the parties with the ability to efficiently use materials disclosed in both actions interchangeably, while applying uniform protection against public disclosure to the extent possible. The parties intend to seek entry of substantially similar Stipulated Protective Orders in both actions. However, nothing in this Stipulated Protective Order constitutes an admission or waiver by any

party of any objection concerning discoverability, relevance, admissibility, or any other legal or equitable arguments which may be raised in either action.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Challenging Party: a Party or Non-Party that challenges the designation of information or items under this Order.

2.2 “CONFIDENTIAL” Information or Items: information (regardless of how it is generated, stored or maintained) or tangible things that qualify for protection under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c).

2.3 Counsel (without qualifier): Outside Counsel and House Counsel (as well as their support staff).

2.4 Designating Party: a Party or Non-Party that designates information or items that it produces in disclosures or in responses to discovery as “CONFIDENTIAL” or “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY”.

2.5 Disclosure or Discovery Material: all items or information, regardless of the medium or manner in which it is generated, stored, or maintained (including, among other things, testimony, transcripts, and tangible things), that are produced or generated in disclosures or responses to discovery in this matter.

2.6 Expert: a person with specialized knowledge or experience in a matter pertinent to the litigation who (1) has been retained by a Party or its counsel to serve as an expert witness or as a consultant in this action, (2) is not a past or current employee of a Party or of a Party’s competitor, and (3) at the time of retention, is not anticipated to become an employee of a Party or of a Party’s competitor.

2.7 “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY” Information or Items: extremely sensitive “Confidential Information or Items,” disclosure of which to another Party or Non-Party would create a substantial risk of serious harm that could not be avoided by less restrictive means.

2.8 House Counsel: attorneys who are employees of a party to this action. House Counsel does not include Outside Counsel.

2.9 Non-Party: any natural person, partnership, corporation, association, or other legal entity not named as a Party to this action.

2.10 Outside Counsel: attorneys who are not employees of a party to this action but are retained to represent or advise a party to this action and have appeared in this action on behalf of that party or are affiliated with a law firm which has appeared on behalf of that party or are working in concert with attorneys who have appeared on behalf of a party to this action and have signed the acknowledgement and agreement to be bound.

2.11 Party: any party to this action, including all of its officers, directors, employees, consultants, retained experts, and Outside Counsel (and their support staffs).

2.12 Producing Party: a Party or Non-Party that produces Disclosure or Discovery Material in this action.

2.13 Professional Vendors: persons or entities that provide litigation support services (e.g., photocopying, videotaping, translating, preparing exhibits or demonstrations, and organizing, storing, or retrieving data in any form or medium) and their employees and subcontractors.

2.16 Protected Material: any Disclosure or Discovery Material that is designated as “CONFIDENTIAL,” or as “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY.”

2.17 Receiving Party: a Party that receives Disclosure or Discovery Material from a Producing Party.

2.18 C.D. Cal. Action: the action pending in the United States District Court for the Central District of California, titled *VSB OPCO, LLC v. Snack Innovations*, Case No. 2:23-cv-07166-SVW-PVC.

3. SCOPE

The protections conferred by this Stipulation and Order cover not only Protected Material (as defined above), but also (1) any information copied or extracted from Protected Material; (2)

all copies, excerpts, summaries, or compilations of Protected Material; and (3) any testimony, conversations, or presentations by Parties or their Counsel that might reveal Protected Material. However, the protections conferred by this Stipulation and Order do not cover the following information: (a) any information that is in the public domain at the time of disclosure to a Receiving Party or becomes part of the public domain after its disclosure to a Receiving Party as a result of publication not involving a violation of this Order, including becoming part of the public record through trial or otherwise; and (b) any information known to the Receiving Party prior to the disclosure or obtained by the Receiving Party after the disclosure from a source who obtained the information lawfully and under no obligation of confidentiality to the Designating Party. Any use of Protected Material at trial shall be governed by a separate agreement or order.

4. DURATION

Even after final disposition of this litigation, the confidentiality obligations imposed by this Order shall remain in effect until a Designating Party agrees otherwise in writing or a court order otherwise directs. Final disposition shall be deemed to be the later of (1) dismissal of all claims and defenses in this action, with or without prejudice; (2) final judgment herein after the completion and exhaustion of all appeals, rehearings, remands, trials, or reviews of this action, including the time limits for filing any motions or applications for extension of time pursuant to applicable law; (3) dismissal of all claims and defenses in the C.D. Cal. Action, with or without prejudice; and (4) final judgment in the C.D. Cal. Action after the completion and exhaustion of all appeals, rehearings, remands, trials, or reviews of the C.D. Cal. Action, including the time limits for filing any motions or applications for extension of time pursuant to applicable law.

5. DESIGNATING PROTECTED MATERIAL

5.1 Exercise of Restraint and Care in Designating Material for Protection. Each Party or Non-Party that designates information or items for protection under this Order must take care to limit any such designation to material that qualifies under the appropriate standards. To the extent it is practical to do so, the Designating Party must designate for protection only those parts of material, documents, items, or oral or written communications that qualify – so that other

portions of the material, documents, items, or communications for which protection is not warranted are not swept unjustifiably within the ambit of this Order.

Designations that are shown to have been made for an improper purpose (e.g., to unnecessarily encumber or retard the case development process or to impose unnecessary expenses and burdens on other parties) expose the Designating Party to sanctions.

If it comes to a Designating Party's attention that information or items that it designated for protection do not qualify for protection at all or do not qualify for the level of protection initially asserted, that Designating Party must promptly notify all other parties that it is withdrawing the mistaken designation.

5.2 Manner and Timing of Designations. Except as otherwise provided in this Order (see, e.g., second paragraph of section 5.2(a) below), or as otherwise stipulated or ordered, Disclosure or Discovery Material that qualifies for protection under this Order must be clearly so designated before the material is disclosed or produced.

Designation in conformity with this Order requires:

(a) for information in documentary form (e.g., paper or electronic documents, but excluding transcripts of depositions or other pretrial or trial proceedings), that the Producing Party affix the legend "CONFIDENTIAL" or "HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS' EYES ONLY" to each page that contains protected material. If only a portion or portions of the material on a page qualifies for protection, the Producing Party also must clearly identify the protected portion(s) (e.g., by making appropriate markings in the margins) and must specify, for each portion, the level of protection being asserted.

A Party or Non-Party that makes original documents or materials available for inspection need not designate them for protection until after the inspecting Party has indicated which material it would like copied and produced. During the inspection and before the designation, all of the material made available for inspection shall be deemed "HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS' EYES ONLY." After the inspecting Party has identified the documents it wants copied and produced, the Producing Party must determine which documents, or portions thereof,

qualify for protection under this Order. Then, before producing the specified documents, the Producing Party must affix the appropriate legend (“CONFIDENTIAL” or “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY”) to each page that contains Protected Material. If only a portion or portions of the material on a page qualifies for protection, the Producing Party also must clearly identify the protected portion(s) (e.g., by making appropriate markings in the margins) and must specify, for each portion, the level of protection being asserted.

(b) for testimony given in deposition or in other pretrial or trial proceedings, that the Designating Party identify on the record, before the close of the deposition, hearing, or other proceeding, all protected testimony and specify the level of protection being asserted. When it is impractical to identify separately each portion of testimony that is entitled to protection and it appears that substantial portions of the testimony may qualify for protection, the Designating Party may invoke on the record (before the deposition, hearing, or other proceeding is concluded) a right to have up to 21 days after receipt of the transcript to identify the specific portions of the testimony as to which protection is sought and to specify the level of protection being asserted. Only those portions of the testimony that are appropriately designated for protection within the 21 days shall be covered by the provisions of this Stipulated Protective Order. Alternatively, a Designating Party may specify, at the deposition or up to 21 days after receipt of the transcript if that period is properly invoked, that the entire transcript shall be treated as “CONFIDENTIAL” or “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY.”

Parties shall give the other parties notice if they reasonably expect a deposition, hearing or other proceeding to include Protected Material so that the other parties can ensure that only authorized individuals who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A) are present at those proceedings. The use of a document as an exhibit at a deposition shall not in any way affect its designation as “CONFIDENTIAL” or “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY.”

Transcripts containing Protected Material shall have an obvious legend on the title page that the transcript contains Protected Material, and the title page shall be followed by a list of all pages (including line numbers as appropriate) that have been designated as Protected Material and the level of protection being asserted by the Designating Party. The Designating Party shall inform the court reporter of these requirements. Any transcript that is prepared before the expiration of a 21-day period for designation shall be treated during that period as if it had been designated “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY” in its entirety unless otherwise agreed. After the expiration of that period, the transcript shall be treated only as actually designated.

(c) for information produced in some form other than documentary and for any other tangible items, that the Producing Party affix in a prominent place on the exterior of the container or containers in which the information or item is stored the legend “CONFIDENTIAL” or “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY.” If only a portion or portions of the information or item warrant protection, the Producing Party, to the extent practicable, shall identify the protected portion(s) and specify the level of protection being asserted.

5.3 Inadvertent Failures to Designate. If timely corrected, an inadvertent failure to designate qualified information or items does not, standing alone, waive the Designating Party’s right to secure protection under this Order for such material. Upon timely correction of a designation, the Receiving Party must make reasonable efforts to assure that the material is treated in accordance with the provisions of this Order.

6. CHALLENGING CONFIDENTIALITY DESIGNATIONS

6.1 Timing of Challenges. Any Party or Non-Party may challenge a designation of confidentiality at any time. Unless a prompt challenge to a Designating Party’s confidentiality designation is necessary to avoid foreseeable, substantial unfairness, unnecessary economic burdens, or a significant disruption or delay of the litigation, a Party does not waive its right to challenge a confidentiality designation by electing not to mount a challenge promptly after the original designation is disclosed.

6.2 Manner of Challenges. Any challenge to a designation shall be made in the manner prescribed by the Court for the resolution of discovery disputes. The burden of persuasion in any such challenge proceeding shall be on the Designating Party. Frivolous challenges and those made for an improper purpose (e.g., to harass or impose unnecessary expenses and burdens on other parties) may expose the Challenging Party to sanctions. Unless the Designating Party has waived the confidentiality designation by failing to file a motion to retain confidentiality as described above, all parties shall continue to afford the material in question the level of protection to which it is entitled under the Producing Party's designation until the court rules on the challenge.

7. ACCESS TO AND USE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL

7.1 Basic Principles. A Receiving Party may use Protected Material that is disclosed or produced by another Party or by a Non-Party in connection with this case or the C.D. Cal. Action only for prosecuting, defending, or attempting to settle this litigation or the C.D. Cal. Action. Such Protected Material may be disclosed only to the categories of persons and under the conditions described in this Order. When the litigation has been terminated, a Receiving Party must comply with the provisions of section 14 below (FINAL DISPOSITION).

Protected Material must be stored and maintained by a Receiving Party at a location and in a secure manner that ensures that access is limited to the persons authorized under this Order.

7.2 Disclosure of “CONFIDENTIAL” Information or Items. Unless otherwise ordered by the court or permitted in writing by the Designating Party, a Receiving Party may disclose any information or item designated “CONFIDENTIAL” only to:

(a) the Receiving Party’s Outside Counsel in this action, as well as employees of said Outside Counsel to whom it is reasonably necessary to disclose the information for this litigation and who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” that is attached hereto as Exhibit A;

- (b) the officers, directors, and employees (including House Counsel) of the Receiving Party to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this litigation and who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A);
- (c) Experts (as defined in this Order) of the Receiving Party to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this litigation and who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A);
- (d) the court and its personnel;
- (e) court reporters and their staff;
- (f) professional jury or trial consultants and mock jurors, and Professional Vendors to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this litigation and who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A);
- (g) during their depositions, witnesses in the action to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary and who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A). Pages of transcribed deposition testimony or exhibits to depositions that reveal Protected Material must be separately bound by the court reporter and may not be disclosed to anyone except as permitted under this Stipulated Protective Order.
- (h) the author or recipient of a document containing the information or a custodian or other person who otherwise possessed or knew the information.

7.3 Disclosure of “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY”

Information or Items. Unless otherwise ordered by the court or permitted in writing by the Designating Party, a Receiving Party may disclose any information or item designated “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY” only to:

- (a) the Receiving Party’s Outside Counsel, as well as employees of said Outside Counsel to whom it is reasonably necessary to disclose the information for this litigation and who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” that is attached hereto as Exhibit A;

- (b) Experts of the Receiving Party (1) to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this litigation, (2) who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A), and (3) as to whom the procedures set forth in paragraph 7.4(a)(2), below, have been followed];
 - (c) the court and its personnel;
 - (d) court reporters and their staff;
 - (e) professional jury or trial consultants and mock jurors, and Professional Vendors to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this litigation and who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A); and
 - (f) the author or recipient of a document containing the information or a custodian or other person who otherwise possessed or knew the information.

7.4 Procedures for Approving or Objecting to Disclosure of “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY” Information or Items to or Experts.
“CONFIDENTIAL” or “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY” information or items may be disclosed to an Expert without disclosure of the identity of the Expert as long as the Expert is not a current officer, director, or employee of a competitor of a Party or anticipated to become one.

8. PROTECTED MATERIAL SUBPOENAED OR ORDERED PRODUCED IN OTHER LITIGATION

If a Party is served with a subpoena or a court order issued in other litigation that compels disclosure of any information or items designated in this action as “CONFIDENTIAL” or “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY” that Party must:

- (a) promptly notify in writing the Designating Party. Such notification shall include a copy of the subpoena or court order;
- (b) promptly notify in writing the party who caused the subpoena or order to issue in the other litigation that some or all of the material covered by the subpoena or order is subject to this Protective Order. Such notification shall include a copy of this Stipulated Protective Order; and

(c) cooperate with respect to all reasonable procedures sought to be pursued by the Designating Party whose Protected Material may be affected.

If the Designating Party timely seeks a protective order, the Party served with the subpoena or court order shall not produce any information designated in this action as “CONFIDENTIAL” or “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY” before a determination by the court from which the subpoena or order issued, unless the Party has obtained the Designating Party’s permission. The Designating Party shall bear the burden and expense of seeking protection in that court of its confidential material – and nothing in these provisions should be construed as authorizing or encouraging a Receiving Party in this action to disobey a lawful directive from another court.

10. A NON-PARTY’S PROTECTED MATERIAL SOUGHT TO BE PRODUCED IN THIS LITIGATION

(a) The terms of this Order are applicable to information produced by a Non-Party in this action and designated as “CONFIDENTIAL” or “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL – ATTORNEYS’ EYES ONLY”. Such information produced by Non-Parties in connection with this litigation is protected by the remedies and relief provided by this Order. Nothing in these provisions should be construed as prohibiting a Non-Party from seeking additional protections.

(b) In the event that a Party is required, by a valid discovery request, to produce a Non-Party’s confidential information in its possession, and the Party is subject to an agreement with the Non-Party not to produce the Non-Party’s confidential information, then the Party shall:

1. promptly notify in writing the Requesting Party and the Non-Party that some or all of the information requested is subject to a confidentiality agreement with a Non-Party;
2. promptly provide the Non-Party with a copy of the Stipulated Protective Order in this litigation, the relevant discovery request(s), and a reasonably specific description of the information requested; and
3. make the information requested available for inspection by the Non-Party.

(c) If the Non-Party fails to object or seek a protective order from this court within 14 days of receiving the notice and accompanying information, the Receiving Party may produce the Non-Party's confidential information responsive to the discovery request. If the Non-Party timely seeks a protective order, the Receiving Party shall not produce any information in its possession or control that is subject to the confidentiality agreement with the Non-Party before a determination by the court. Absent a court order to the contrary, the Non-Party shall bear the burden and expense of seeking protection in this court of its Protected Material.

11. UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL

If a Receiving Party learns that, by inadvertence or otherwise, it has disclosed Protected Material to any person or in any circumstance not authorized under this Stipulated Protective Order, the Receiving Party must immediately (a) notify in writing the Designating Party of the unauthorized disclosures, (b) use its best efforts to retrieve all unauthorized copies of the Protected Material, (c) inform the person or persons to whom unauthorized disclosures were made of all the terms of this Order, and (d) request such person or persons to execute the "Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound" that is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

12. INADVERTENT PRODUCTION OF PRIVILEGED OR OTHERWISE PROTECTED MATERIAL

When a Producing Party gives notice to Receiving Parties that certain inadvertently produced material is subject to a claim of privilege or other protection, the obligations of the Receiving Parties are those set forth in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(b)(5)(B). This provision is not intended to modify whatever procedure may be established in an e-discovery order that provides for production without prior privilege review. Pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence 502(d) and (e), insofar as the parties reach an agreement on the effect of disclosure of a communication or information covered by the attorney-client privilege or work product protection, the parties may incorporate their agreement in the stipulated protective order submitted to the court.

13. MISCELLANEOUS

13.1 Right to Further Relief. Nothing in this Order abridges the right of any person to seek its modification by the court in the future.

13.2 Right to Assert Other Objections. By stipulating to the entry of this Protective Order no Party waives any right it otherwise would have to object to disclosing or producing any information or item on any ground not addressed in this Stipulated Protective Order. Similarly, no Party waives any right to object on any ground to use in evidence of any of the material covered by this Protective Order.

13.3 Filing Protected Material. All persons seeking to file redacted documents or documents under seal with the Court in connection with non-dispositive matters, or in cases where the Parties have consented to the jurisdiction of Magistrate Judge Stein for all purposes, shall follow Section I(H) of Magistrate Judge Stein's Individual Practices in Civil Cases as well as the applicable provisions of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and rules and standing orders of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. With respect to dispositive matters, the Individual Rules of the presiding District Judge shall be followed instead of Magistrate Judge Stein's Individual Practices. The Parties shall use their best efforts to minimize such sealing. Any Party filing a motion or any other papers with the Court under seal shall also publicly file a redacted copy of the same, via the Court's Electronic Case Filing ("ECF") system, that redacts only the Confidential Discovery Material itself, and not text that in no material way reveals the Confidential Discovery Material.

14. FINAL DISPOSITION

Within 60 days after the final disposition of this action, as defined in paragraph 4, each Receiving Party must return all Protected Material to the Producing Party or destroy such material. As used in this subdivision, "all Protected Material" includes all copies, abstracts, compilations, summaries, and any other format reproducing or capturing any of the Protected Material. Whether the Protected Material is returned or destroyed, the Receiving Party must submit a written certification to the Producing Party (and, if not the same person or entity, to the Designating Party) by the 60-day deadline that (1) identifies (by category, where appropriate) all

the Protected Material that was returned or destroyed and (2) affirms that the Receiving Party has not retained any copies, abstracts, compilations, summaries or any other format reproducing or capturing any of the Protected Material. Notwithstanding this provision, Counsel are entitled to retain an archival copy of all pleadings, motion papers, trial, deposition, and hearing transcripts, legal memoranda, correspondence, deposition and trial exhibits, expert reports, attorney work product, and consultant and expert work product, even if such materials contain Protected Material. Any such archival copies that contain or constitute Protected Material remain subject to this Protective Order as set forth in Section 4 (DURATION).

IT IS SO STIPULATED, THROUGH COUNSEL OF RECORD.

DATED: April 29, 2024

/s/ Jeffrey M. Theodore
Attorneys for Plaintiff

DATED: April 29, 2024

/s/ Patrick Hines
Attorneys for Defendant Snack Innovations, Inc.

DATED: April 29, 2024

/s/ Patrick Michael Kennell
Attorneys for Defendant Allen Benzaken

PURSUANT TO STIPULATION, IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED: May 2, 2024


Hon. Naomi Reice Buchwald
United States District Judge

EXHIBIT A

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT TO BE BOUND

I, _____ [print or type full name], of _____ [print or type full address], declare under penalty of perjury that I have read in its entirety and understand the Stipulated Protective Order that was issued by the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York on [date] in the case of _____ [insert formal name of the case and the number and initials assigned to it by the court]. I agree to comply with and to be bound by all the terms of this Stipulated Protective Order and I understand and acknowledge that failure to so comply could expose me to sanctions and punishment in the nature of contempt. I solemnly promise that I will not disclose in any manner any information or item that is subject to this Stipulated Protective Order to any person or entity except in strict compliance with the provisions of this Order.

I further agree to submit to the jurisdiction of the United States District Court for the Northern District of California for the purpose of enforcing the terms of this Stipulated Protective Order, even if such enforcement proceedings occur after termination of this action.

I hereby appoint _____ [print or type full name] of _____ [print or type full address and telephone number] as my New York agent for service of process in connection with this action or any proceedings related to enforcement of this Stipulated Protective Order.

Date: _____

City and State where sworn and signed: _____

Printed name: _____
[printed name]

Signature: _____